

# **“Why Should I Hire You”**

## **You and the Interview**

### **Workshop Agenda**

#### **Session I—The Screener**

- Dynamics of Effective Communication
- Building Rapport
- 13 Most Frequently Asked Questions
- Handling Those Tough Money Questions
- The Close—Where Do We Go From Here?

#### **Session II—The Decision Maker(s)**

- Taking Charge—Making Yourself Irresistible
- Uncovering Employer Needs & Wants
- Stress Interviews
- The Close & Follow-up

#### **Session III—Overcoming “Buyer” Objections**

- Iceberg Technique
- ARTS Technique
- Burden of Proof Transfer
- The Offer

# **Congratulations!!**

# OVERCOMING BUYER OBJECTIONS

When it comes to job campaigning many of us tend to be more conscious of perceived liabilities than strengths. This is both unfortunate and unproductive since their next employer will be hiring them not for their liabilities, but for their strengths.

How do you react during an interview when confronted with an apparent liability? Do you become defensive, or evasive, or argumentative, or worst of all, acquiescent? Those of us who make an interview session a time for confession will be about as successful as those who believe career advancement can be achieved on the basis of conscientious hard work, patience and loyalty alone.

When addressing liabilities, it is important to recognize that "critical" is dependent on each person. What is serious to us may not matter to others.

Therefore, it is important that we treat potential liabilities carefully and positively, neither overreacting nor underestimating them. The opportunity to discuss openly is an excellent chance to showcase the type of behavior you would bring to the organization. We suggest three valuable techniques for handling perceived liabilities or "buyer objections"

## Iceberg Technique

Many individuals, when confronted with an apparent liability or simply questioned on a sensitive subject, react in a very counterproductive way. In defending or rationalizing their role, they too often disclose information that only makes the situation worse. For example, one distinguishing physical characteristic of an iceberg is that 90% of its volume is hidden below the water's surface. Rather than revealing all information (i.e. the mass of the submerged iceberg) it is much safer to stay above the surface. After all, protracted submersion results in drowning.

When dealing with sensitive issues, remain in a position of strength. If challenged. Structure your response in a controlled way, just a slice off the top. Quite often, this single slice will be sufficient to dissuade the other individual from probing more deeply. Just make sure your response is not evasive, defensive, argumentative or dishonest. Second and third "slices" should also be prepared to make sure your position remains positive. Each additional "slice" is a little more detailed than the previous one but should be structured to keep you well above the surface and in control. The key to the Iceberg Technique works is projection. That is, positive non-defensive seemingly straightforward and non-evasive. It is as though you were saying. "This is really not a serious matter, and therefore, let us return to more important things." (Like how I can help you to achieve your goals)

Consider this example in which an individual has been terminated. The sequence might look like this,

*Employer:* Are you unemployed?

Candidate: (1st Slice) Why, yes I am. I left my employer last month.

Employer: Why were you terminated?

Candidate: (2nd Slice) "My position/department was eliminated in a corporate reorganization.

*Employer:* Why were you let go and others were retained?

Candidate: (3rd Slice) I'm sure you can appreciate that in today's economic climate, attractive alternatives in retrenchment situations are difficult to find. In my case, I was offered an alternative position but, because I wanted to move forward, rather than laterally, I chose to seek a new challenge outside the company.

Note that all the candidates' statements are brief, positive and seemingly directly responsive to the question asked.

The Iceberg Technique can also be applied beneficially when the candidate isn't sure as to what kind of information the interviewer is seeking. In such instances, it's important to proceed with caution until the interviewer's intent or concern is clearly identified.

**For Example,**

*Employer:* How do you feel about the President's economic policies?

Candidate: That's an interesting question. May I ask why you are interested?

*Employer:* I was just interested in where you stand on this issue. Do you support his philosophy?

Candidate: Well, I'm no expert on economic theory or policy. As an interested citizen certainly hope that the President and his advisors are acting on sound market intelligence and doing so in way that will help this country grow.

In this example, the candidate is being careful to avoid a possible philosophical dispute, which probably has little bearing on the qualifications for the position. On the other hand, the questions are answered briefly and positively.

# ARTS or THE 4-STEP TECHNIQUE

The second technique for handling perceived liabilities is called ARTS (**A**cknowledge, **R**edirect, **T**est, and **S**uccess) a helpful acronym explained below. Use it only when you are certain that the interviewer has a definite and specific concern.

Recognize that many "liabilities" are simply stereotypes, labels that carry several connotations within them. For example, "unemployed" can be viewed as the label carrying any of these connotations: Incompetent, disloyal, "personality problems," etc. The label of "too old" can mean inflexible /set in one's ways or less than necessary stamina/enthusiasm probable difficulty in working effectively with younger employees. Perhaps "unrelated experience" implies that a lengthy learning period will be required before meaningful contributions can be made.

While you may not be able to change the use of labels, you can certainly refute their connotations, i.e. the interviewer's perception of what the label really means. The ARTS Technique should be employed only when you have verified that the interviewer has a sincere concern about some aspect of your background or qualifications. Properly applied, the ARTS Technique can frequently convert a perceived liability into a perceived asset. These are the steps to follow:

## **A = Acknowledge**

Acknowledge what, the liability? **Absolutely not.** We are dealing with a perceived liability and not one that has actually been established. Acknowledge the fact that the interviewer has a concern? Again, no, As a matter of fact, when countering a liability you should never repeat it rather, you should focus on the positives below. You are acknowledging, positively, that this is an appropriate item for discussion. The aim is to establish you as an understanding, emphatic being.

Ways of acknowledging:

1. "I appreciate you interest (Mr.1 Mrs.-) it is very important to me."
2. "That's an important topic for discussion. I understand bringing it up."
3. "I have done a great deal of thinking about my potential in this firm and am pleased we have a moment to discuss this."
4. "That's an interesting way to look at the situation."

## **R = Redirect**

It is very important that you treat all buyer objections in a positive, non-defensive seemingly straightforward and non-evasive manner. You can do this by recognizing that every perceived liability is like a two-sided coin. The interviewer usually is only seeing the stereotype "negative" side. It is your challenge to **Redirect** his/her attention to the more relevant positive side of the coin.

For example, if the buyer's objection is a lack of experience in a particular industry, you will want to emphasize functional and professional skills that are easily transferable.

That is, the ability to lead project teams, skills in reducing expenditures, increasing sales and your ability to rapidly absorb new techniques and methods.

Specific examples of the two-sided nature of most liabilities are listed on page 7. When "labeled" with any of the negative stereotypical concepts in the left-hand column, you should redirect the interviewer's attention to the positive characteristic in the right-hand column.

You can present Redirect statements by saying:

1. "Would I be correct in assuming that...?"
2. "You want to be sure that..."
3. "What you are telling me is that..."
4. "The person who gets the job should be or have... Isn't that what you are saying?"
5. "And isn't it also true that you want someone who..."

Note that the additional question is to evoke the interviewer's response. If you don't get a favorable response to the question, there is little to be gained by proceeding further. Rather, we must try another Redirect statement in hopes of gaining a positive response first. If two Redirect attempts fail to elicit the necessary positive response, frequently we can determine the desired qualities by asking the interviewer, "What capabilities would the ideal candidate have in this area?"

### **T = Test**

Once the interviewer has responded positively to your Redirect statement indicating qualifications that he/she wants in the candidate, you must Test to verify that your ability to demonstrate the redirection capabilities will remove the interviewer's previously expressed concern. Sample Test questions could be phased as follows:

"If I could illustrate to you that I have these qualities... or I am that kind of person etc., would that be helpful?"

Recognize that you may get a positive response; a negative response simply means that the objection is more deeply embedded in the interviewer's mind. The persistence shown here will be in asking more **Test** questions before moving on the "**S**".

What would you do when you are unable to overcome the objection? Simply ask, "WHY"? Recognize two points:

1. Neither the **ARTS** nor the **Iceberg Technique** is a panacea, guaranteed to erase a liability, nothing can guarantee that. But you will be pleasantly surprised by how often they work.
2. It is easier to remove a perceived liability while you are face to face rather than afterwards with either a letter or phone call.

If the interviewer repeatedly doesn't respond positively to the Test question, ask him/her to explain more precisely the nature of the concern. You may learn that it is not

a "real liability" at all; simply, a misunderstanding on the interviewer's part and one that can be cleared up easily.

### **S = SAR or Statement**

Once you have received a positive response to your **Test** question, use a **SAR** story to demonstrate the capabilities we have identified in the **Redirect** statement.

When you cannot muster an appropriate SAR story to support the redirect capabilities, be prepared to offer a straightforward explanation that will support them. Keep it simple, positive and to the point.

### **Feedback Questions**

When you have finished providing a clear, relevant example of the type of contribution you are prepared to make, be sure to turn back the discussion to the interviewer by means of a feedback question.

A feedback question is designed to "close the loop," to determine whether the message sent by you was the same one received. Two types of feedback questions may be used:

Closed probes (Only require yes/no answer. Preferably yes)

- Was that explanation helpful?
- Do you see why I feel I can make an immediate contribution?
- Does that make sense?

Open Probes (designed to get the interviewer into a conversation)

- What other qualities are you looking for?
- How do you see me fitting into your organization?
- What other area of interest should we be discussing?

Should you sense residual concern on the part of the interviewer, our next technique may resolve the problem. In many instances it can be applied effectively in **Redirect** or **Test** steps when you are experiencing difficulty in securing positive feedback. The third technique is called

## **The Burden of Proof Transfer**

Here you ask the interviewer, in a very courteous way, (an expression of being slightly confused or even perplexed can help) "**Excuse me, but is there a particular functional skill which you feel is critical to the position, and which you feel I don't have?**"

When the burden of proof has been transferred to the interviewer, often his/her concern may mysteriously disappear. This is because he/she discovers there is little if any substance behind the stereotyped liability label. *Note also that we have switched the discussion from **experience to skills**.* Skills are far easier to document. In essence,

the Burden of Proof Transfer statement provides you with more information from which to proceed.

<b>LIABILITIES</b> Common Liabilities	<b>STRENGTHS</b> Positive Characteristics
Too Many Jobs	Loyalty, Stability, Interested In Long Term Career
One Job For A Long Time	Adaptable, Flexible, Ambitious
Experience In A Different Industry	Can Learn And Contribute Quickly
Earnings Relatively Low	Contributor, Achiever
Unemployed	Downsized, Position Elimination
Terminated From Previous Job	Contract Ended, Company Failed
Too Young	Maturity Of Judgment, Able To Deal With People At All Levels
Too Old	Energetic, Hard Driving, Flexible
No Experience In Large Firms	Can Function Well In Sophisticated Environment
No Experience In Small Firms	Flexible, Entrepreneurial
Too Much Of Generalist	Can Apply Skills To Specific Problems
Too Much Of A Specialist	Flexible, Possesses Broad Perspectives
Unrelated/Insufficient Education	Highly Intelligent, Posses Specialized Knowledge And Or Has Been Persistent In Gaining Required Knowledge

# BUYER OBJECTION WORKSHEET

Perceived Liability:

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Acknowledge (positive)

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Redirect

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Test

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SAR

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Feedback Question

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